

FANTASY IMAGE

A man with dark hair and a serious expression is shown from the chest up. He is wearing a red jacket with a white collar and a white tag that reads '488A'. He is holding a futuristic, blue and white device in his right hand. In the background, a flying saucer is visible against a dark, starry sky.

Issue 2
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BLAKES' 7

Interview: Vere Lorrimer

Gerry Anderson's
U.F.O.

STAR TREK

Creator Gene Roddenberry

Exclusive
DOCTOR WHO REPORT



Contents

Scanned by Zeg

4 WHO KNOWS!

In an exclusive report, we take a look at the fascinating events that covered the production of Doctor Who's twenty-second season.

10 CRAMMING FOR A TEST

We review *Gene*, the movie!

12 FANTASY IN VIEW

Our round-up of the events surrounding the visual science fiction and fantasy worlds.

16 STAR TREK CON-NED!

A report on a Star Trek convention that boasted its creator as guest of honour.

19 U.F.O.

Gerry Anderson's first live action science fiction programme, fore-runner to "Space 1999" is assessed.

24 MEMORIES OF A SURVIVOR

Vera Lomax, producer and director of "Blake's 7" relates his memories of the epic.

29 SPOOK FIXED IT FOR JIM

Our cover feature, our editor mourns.

30 LETTERS

Yes we dared! The section for your views.

Front Cover - Spook puppet by Stephen Mansfield. Photograph by Stephen Payne.

Back Cover - Servant from "Blake's 7" © Armstrong Editorial.



Editorial

Welcome to issue two of "Fantasy Image". We most certainly have made an impact! I have been extremely delighted with the comments and overwhelming praise for the premier issue of the magazine.

With "Fantasy Image" our aim is to cover the visual fantasy worlds with a unique British perspective! Television is a very important and active medium. It puts science fiction and fantasy into your home every week. It is an area which has been much neglected in other magazines and we intend to rectify this through our pages. This does not mean we will be ignoring the movie scene, for this has a vast contribution to make on the overall visual fantasy world.

Well that's our intention, I hope you enjoy this issue, and through writing to us (and subscribing!) make it THE magazine for you!



Photograph by John Armstrong



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FANTASY IMAGE

The British magazine based on the visual fantasy worlds

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WHO KNOWS

An exclusive feature on the latest Doctor Who season by Richard Marson

Perhaps the most frequently posed question to Doctor Who stars both in front of and behind the scene concerns all those things that go wrong during the making of the programme. Another popular one is the old chestnut 'Do you remember things that made you laugh?' Because of the intensity with which the series is made many of these become forgotten and a range of stock stories emerge, but if one is outside the production process itself, everything can be taken in and remembered. This, then, is the purpose of the following article - to put on paper the fascinating events that covered the filming of Doctor Who's twenty second season.

Attack of the Cyberman

Filming for 'Attack of the Cyberman' took place in many locations all over London. The most bizarre was probably the car scene, filmed nearby HammerSmith Broadway Imagine, just off a busy shopping area plans were being made that would span the stars, and

practically no-one noticed. The script was quite near to Television Centre, and still few people were aware of the filming. As filming carried on more people appeared. Fortunately they were mostly well-behaved and moved as instructed by the patient production team. Although Colin Baker had been seen in only one story he was

often surrounded by people wanting photographs or simply to talk. He handled them all very well in a very professional manner.

Telos turned out to be very similar to the planet in 'Two Doctors', in other words it was filmed at the same place! The weather managed to keep from raining but delighted in changing from cloudy and chilly to sunny and quite warm. Another problem was that it was not easy for the actors in the Cyberman costumes to see where they were going, and running up and down very steep slopes needed careful direction and telling the actors through their steps.

Paula Moore's original script, entitled *The Cold War* was extensively rewritten, toning down the involvement of, for example, Halley's Comet and the parts of Babs and Station were enlarged to include the characters in episode one. The very first scene, recorded last thing on one of the evening sessions, never made it to the finally edited episode, although considerable trouble had been taken over it. The opening shot was to have been a subjective point of view from the Cyberman in the sewer, showing real rats scurrying by a wall, before they dart into one of the tunnels to await the arrival of poor old Bill and David. Taken via a lightweight portable camera, the main problem with the shot appeared to be a combination of bores and camera shadows, while there was some difficulty in getting the rats to act. Some of the team were visibly nervous as the creatures scuttled about and wouldn't keep still for recording.

When Colin and Nicola were walking down a sewer tunnel, Colin tripped over the set at exactly the moment he said the line 'No line of sight man!' After his undignified stumble, he added, 'But there are now.' Colin Baker's wit was at its very best through all of *Attack* as his little quip about the show demonstrated - one of the actors playing the Cyberman had to be substituted for an explosion with a model. On hearing the call 'Can we have the dummy in Tom's place?' Colin retorted, 'Sounds like The Five Doctors doesn't it!'

Guest stars Faith Brown and Sarah Greene were also the source of amusement. Faith came out with a whole variety of accents during rehearsals for



A Cyberman emerges, looking rather the worse for wear

her character, Faith. When supposed to greet the Doctor she said, 'Hello chuck, you alright then?' in a voice clearly modelled on Hilda Ogden of LTV's Coronation Street. Sarah Greene, on the other hand, asked for a Doctor because her mask was too tight, allowing Colin Baker to reply 'There's a cure for that. Remove your clothing very slowly to that camera there.' Sarah met this with the immortal words 'I can't. The zip's stuck!'

Most of the recording went quite smoothly with the most takes being required for scenes like the one in the first episode which called for Nicola Bryant to climb up a ladder again and again, and which left her predictably out of breath. The Cybermen themselves seemed surprisingly uncomplicated to handle, although director Matthew Robinson was far from happy with the appearance of the Cyber Controller, asking costume to take in the silver trousers which were far too baggy. Unfortunately there wasn't time, a factor which also prevented some scenes from being as thrashed enough.

Vengeance on Varos

The second story of the season was Philip Martin's *Vengeance on Varos*, recorded all in studio in the hot summer of 1984. It got very hot in the studio, too, and for actor Nabil Shaban, playing 86, this was a particular discomfort. Between takes members of the crew would rush forward with small electric fans to keep him cool, and on completing his part, the studio gave Nabil a spontaneous round of applause.

Colin Baker was not the only one whose wit was to the fore this time. Guest star Martin

A native of Telos - 'Attack of the Cyberman'







Jervis kept his colleagues entertained with corny jokes and insisted on telling everyone what his favourite scene was. Baker came out with a classic line on seeing two extras dying rather well before him - 'Apart from that, how did you enjoy working on the show?' When his came to his line about the poisonous tendrils 'Don't touch them!' and had Peri's retort as to why not, he ad libbed 'Because they'll fall down and the props department will be very embarrassed.'

A wind machine was needed to achieve the effect of a breeze against Nicola Bryant before

they could CSO her into the Doctor's end of episode delusion. Unfortunately this had to be done several times at varying points during recording, which meant Nicola got extremely cold, and eager for the scene to be finished. Both Nicola and Gerioline Alexander, as Arca, had to be very patient while their transmutation make up was applied and recorded in stages. Jason Connery spent most of one afternoon ruminating to a set, and, uncomfortable though it undoubtedly was, he never complained.

Most of one evening was spent taping the important ac-

tion scene in the mortuary. For this a water tank was specially built in one corner of studio six at Television Centre, and stuntman Gareth Milne had to hold his breath while cut away shots of him were taken. The part where he is pushed into the tank, and later pulls his fellow guard in with him could only be done once so as much rehearsal as possible was allowed. The other stuntman was Roy Alon, Fraser Hines' double on *Emmerdale Farm*.

The Mark of the Rani

Recorded fourth in order but screened as the third story of the season, *The Mark of the Rani*, differed from its contemporaries in that it was allocated only one three day studio recording. This unusual situation was the result of the extensive location filming undertaken for the two part script, which also bore the title *Enter the Rani*. As it was, good old English wet weather put paid to several scenes being filmed and writers Pip and Jane Baker were called to exact hasty rewrites, moving scenes from location to studio. These included all the stuff with Peri



being tracked by the Rani, for example. Apart from the slightly increased burden, the interiors were completed without an over-run during the 18th, 19th and 20th of November.

The filming for 'Mark of the Rani' took place at Sharn Hill Museum, Ironbridge, an almost living museum and ideal place for the mine setting. On screen the area looked very busy indeed, a cist of thousands maybe? Well no. An old theatrical

Two pairs of hands are better than one. Colin Baker gets to grips with Patrick Troughton.



brick was used of someone walking out of shot, quickly changing hat and perhaps some other item of clothing and then waling back in view of the camera.

Interestingly, the set supposed to represent an early nineteenth century bathhouse actually hailed from the series *Tenko*, where it had appeared as the nun's convent. This made up, perhaps, for the expense of specially constructed sets like the Ren's TARDIS and the blacksmith's, which was beautifully detailed and equipped down to the last detail.

The recording itself was a fairly smooth operation, although the dog seen in part one refused to behave, much to the amusement of Colin Baker and Nicole Bryant. Every time they started to say one of their lines the creature would ambie interestedly towards them, looking less than menacing. His owner looked suitably embarrassed and got quite angry before the animal sat still.

Certainly one scene that caused many people to turn away was the Rani giving a maggot to an unconscious miner to eat. The bin of the maggots, all wriggling around, had to be held close to the man's face so it was in shot. Unfortunately, like the rats in *Attack*, the maggots were not trained actors and were rather too active, wriggling out of the bin and down the back of the helpless actor! Thankfully he only had to have a false marzipan maggot put in his mouth but in order for the scene to look correct it had to be rehearsed and adjusted quite a few times with the real maggots just inches away.

The Two Doctors

The whole atmosphere on this production seemed to be one of friendliness with production manager Gary Downie enjoying a great mutual put down session with the wonderful Jacqueline Pearce, and with Colin Baker, Frazer Hines, Patrick Troughton and Nicole Bryant all teasing each other throughout recording. On one afternoon session work was going ahead with rehearsals for one of the climactic scenes just before Chesseon's demise. Without announcing his flying visit, Peter Davison appeared at Colin Baker's shoulder causing everybody else to crack up with hysterical laughter while Colin delivered the gem of a line 'Back so soon?'

Jacqueline Pearce's death scene also caused considered amusement, first of all because she couldn't stand the choking smoke being piped inside the capsule and then because a take was ruined when she accidentally pushed one of the periscope panels out of the set-



Doctor Who photographs © 1992

ting, effectively demolishing the capsule. Seeing her rehearsing without her wig was weird - she looked, of course, like Senalan and since she was acting in time honoured Jacqueline Pearce Senalan style, the effect was the more striking.

During taping of the scenes in the infrastructure, Nicola Bryant banged her shin on one of the metal crossbars and recording had to finish slightly earlier than usual so that she could have some ice applied to the rapidly increasing swelling. This wasn't the only discomfort endured by Nicole for the story - her costume

top was made of scratchy material which obviously irritated because she could be seen pulling and scratching at it over regular intervals. However Nicole endured all with a mixture of fortitude and humour. When she was supposed to look into a mirror and say 'I look awful' she substituted 'I look wonderful. Few would disagree!'

Colin Baker was attempting to do one scene but kept being stopped by Gary Downie for technical reasons. On the next run he came out with a slightly amended piece of dialogue - 'No more sunsets...no more but-

terflys...no more production mergers!'

More problems came with Colin Baker and his Kirby Flying Ballet harness, used to suspend him from the infrastructure. Unfortunately the wires showed clearly and while Colin amused himself by pretending to be one of the flower pot men, attempts were made to shoot round the problem. Viewers of the finished show will see that they sadly failed.

Actress Arnee Delamain came in for her tiny cameo, but instead of leaving the studio when she was finished, char-

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ried everyone with her old world theatrical 'thank you, darling, I adored working with you' to John Stratton, proceeding to exit the floor blowing kisses at her appreciative audience. Patrick Troughton enjoyed himself immensely telling Colin Baker he couldn't act and mock-booming Frazer Hines' attempts at agonised crying for the soundtrack. 'Can't you do better than that, silly boy?' He himself had to dub a whistle for the soundtrack, the last thing he did before finishing the story. At first he made a couple of reasonable attempts but eventually everybody joined in with Gary Downie's coming out about top.

Predictably, the scene with Jamie being prepared for cooking by Shockeye caused a good deal of laughter, especially when Frazer Hines had been tied down. Colin Baker revealed to a camera close-up exactly what the Scot had up his left, which modestly forbids me from saying. John Stratton's application of the tenderiser was also a little unorthodox, need I really say more? Frazer Hines managed to earn laurels as near demolisher of the Hacienda set when, making too quick an entrance, his plaid caught on a door handle! In spite of the vast amount of humour visible on the

set, The Two Doctors was epitomised by some of the tightest and most efficient direction in years. Indeed, Peter Moffatt revealed original plans to have three day studio sessions, saying he was happy with three two days outings. As it was, recording finished at six o'clock on the afternoon of Friday 30th September with a whole evening session saved.

Timelash

Pennant's adventure of the season was Glen McCoy's *Timelash*. Pennant Roberts took a lot of trouble with the show, directing much of it, especially the action shots, from the studio floor, struggling with problems like the occasion where some water was split on the studio floor, thereby washing the paint-

ed surface away and causing considerable delay. Eventually, the production overran with several model shots due to be accomplished in the studio not even started despite virtually a whole day spent setting up a beautiful model stage. After editing it was discovered that episode one ran something like seven minutes over time, while episode two was four minutes short. Cuts were made in the first instalment but, on the second session of *Revelation of the Daleks*, a *Timelash* re-mount was sanctioned, with a scene being added in the TARDIS set, showing the Doctor reflecting the message.

Paul Darrow hammed up his part wonderfully, a fact which Colin Baker mocked by taking off Darrow's sub-Shakespeare style. 'Is my leg departed for Bosworth Field?' to which Darrow replied in similar style without batting an eyelid before both actors could no longer control their laughter. Nicola Bryant had problems in the scenes set in the tunnels of the Morlox, because her boots kept slipping on the highly polished studio floor, while the man operating Herbert's cula board could clearly be seen at first. Overall, however, *Timelash* was so intensive a production that



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The filming at the IBM Buildings

there was little time allowed for the oncoming festivities, although both actors and onlookers found it very amusing to see Pennant Roberts showing people how to die. He did it so well.

Revelation of the Daleks

Eric Seward's virtual comedy *Revelation of the Daleks* closed probably the best season of Doctor Who since Tom Baker's first year in the role. Eleanor Bron came out with a classic on her line about taking over the galaxy - she forgot the line so it came out as follows: "Then I shall become...oh Christ" to which Hugh Walters quickly replied "I find that hard to believe, darling".

The choosing of locations for

filming may not always be obvious. Sometimes it does not seem to be there for any reason, like Spain perhaps? Could it be a coincidence that a certain pantomime was being staged nearby? Whatever, the possibility of an unwanted audience was very neatly avoided by filming in a high security IBM area. All the crew had to wear special identity badges and were restricted to a very small area. Only authorised photography was permitted with strict screening by IBM personnel. The security in filming was probably much better than Davros' defence Force can sometimes be better than fiction.

It was without doubt Terry Molloy who had the most problems to contend with during recording of this story - not only was he working in increasingly

claustrophobic conditions, but he was also constantly having to have his tongue painted black by the make-up artist. All through his cheerfulness was amazing - indulging in wordplay with Colin Baker, with 'Doctor' and 'Davros' pretending to strangle each other.

Graeme Harper was as dedicated as ever in his quest for the best, although by the end of recording he was cutting redundant shot after redundant shot, which, although unnecessary would have given him different angles and approaches when it came to editing. One of the final shots of Gregory and Natasha discovering a body was spoiled by Harper himself who spotted something on the body bag he thought wasn't meant to be there and so it had to be redone!

As the team finished just in time, Graeme Harper thanked his whole side. The final thing changed for the end of the season were the last lines. Originally ending with the Doctor saying "This place is called Trinquel Repose. I think we should leave it that way", the Blackpool lines were added in deference to the start of next season. Predictably, those cut-away close-ups of Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant got more and more silly until Baker was pulling the most incredible faces at the camera on the Blackpool line, while Nicola tried to stop laughing.

With the twenty second season drawn to a close, these were just some of the fascinating and funny stories behind nine months hard, but enjoyable, work.

Hold It! The story does not finish there. On Wednesday, 20th February, the TARDIS materialised again, not in the Doctor Who studio but in the Jim'll Fix It studio. During the afternoon the story was rehearsed, for recording later on in the early evening. This was probably the first time a scene in the TARDIS had an audience on site. In the afternoon producer John Nathan-Turner sat almost in the background watching the scene take shape. It was to his amazement that the Sorteron leader's name was changed from Skike to Nathan and to his surprise it stayed in the recording. The boy, Gareth Jenkins, who Jim was fixing it for, seemed quite at ease with everything going on around him. His absence of a smile probably showed, how seriously he took the whole thing. Considering how quickly the scene was rehearsed and recorded it was to the credit of the director that there were only a few boom shadows and some imaginative camera angles. Better than usual...?

The Cinderella Pantomime with "Who" cast - Buttons coming un-buttoned!



CRAMMING FOR



I must admit, I am probably one of the few people left who has not read the science fiction classic, *Dune*. But I did see the movie!

As a film critic, I may only report upon what a film does, or does not, accomplish without daring comparisons or equating it with other media.

Left: Like Mother like son.
Francesca Annis as Lady Jessica.
Below: Baron Vladimir Harkonnen soon to be on his to Goodyear!



Storytelling

Having said this, I realised the immense scope contained within Frank Herbert's novel, and this is where the film falls flat: in its storytelling. The movie starts with a storytelling introduction by the Emperor's daughter, relating all pertinent background information. Then once (or rather, if) you absorb that, a secret report is filed by the Guild to add (and further confuse with more) information. At last, the opening scene comes with Jose Ferrer as the Emperor plotting against House Atreides.

There seems to be no legitimate reason why the Emperor's daughter should be the story-teller; she has only one line as a character. The opening scene depicts the Emperor allied with House Harkonnen struggling over power against the antagonistic Duke Leto of House Atreides; a sort of cosmic War of the Roses. But the plot quickly re-develops as the story of young Paul Atreides — our hero.

Now if this appears a bit confusing, it is. What I have described is merely the first ten minutes of *Dune*, and the rapidness of significant events does not slow down. At one point, during the screening, I overheard an audience member ask her companion, "Do you understand it, and, if you do, is it good?"

That is the question that director/screenwriter David Lynch (*Elephant Man*, *Eriqenhead*) should have asked himself while making *Dune*. Basically, what the film lacks is good, simple story-telling. Look at George Lucas's *Star Wars*; a story of epic proportions, but told simply.

Direction

Dune is very well done visually. The coarseness of sand and the worms are spectacular. The flying, the battle shields, and the blue within blue eyes were all splendid special effects.

But Lynch failed to direct the actors as many lines seemed uncomfortable and out of place (such as Linda Hunt very ominously announcing, "I am the housekeeper!" Oo! don't scare me like

D U

A TEST

Reviewer Keith Kola

that). Lynch also added, and deleted many details by employing the device of character voice-overs, revealing their thoughts. At first, I thought this was telepathy—it wasn't. Next, I was annoyed by the constant, irritating, whispered interruptions. Finally, I was amused and laughed out loud at such saturated suppositions as "The tooth!"

Dune also, has no audience. Fans of Frank Herbert may abound, but they, by themselves, hardly constitute a healthy, movie box office. The average film consumer will be lost amidst the tidal wave of details. In America, it is being marketed as appealing to children (with story books, activity books, and coloring books). But oral surgery and boil lancing were just two of the Harkonnen pleasures that I found too gruesome, let alone how a small child might react to them.

Acting

Kyle MacLachlan looked too much like Roger Rees for me to enjoy his performance as Paul Atreides. He fulfilled all the prophecies admirably, but then any action (picking his nose, for instance) could fulfill the prophecy as far as the audience knew it. Sean Young, as Chani was anything but beautiful, as Paul believed she was, upon their initial encounter. She provided the needless love interest.

Now, I come to Sting. He played Baron Harkonnen's nephew, Feyd. He looked great in bikini shorts while staring demonically. He shouted excellently while challenging Paul. And he sings terrifically while in concert. But Sting just cannot speak. His acting was marginal in this grossly under-developed character. Sting's gentle voice didn't go with the demented face provided.

Kenneth McMillan turned in the finest performance as the "flying fat man", Baron Vladimir Harkonnen. I, also, quite liked Francesca Annis as the Lady Jessica. So, you see, it wasn't all bad.

At the movie's end one may think, "Is the conclusion a good thing?" "Who are the villains?" or "Was there a true hero?" Dune is rife with Übermensch

Nazism and provides no clue to the future of the universe under absolute power.

To put it simply, a movie should be entertaining, relaxing, and enjoyable, and not make people feel as if they have spent 2½ hours cramming for a test.

Right: Paul Atreides thirsty for battle. Kyle MacLachlan as Paul.
Below: Sting getting down to bare essentials.



NE

IMAGE 11

Fantasy in view

DOCTOR WHO MEETS THE GRADE AXE

They say that a week in politics is a long time. This seems to hold true for television politics as well, as seen by the recent saga of when, if at all, the good Doctor would next appear on television in a new story.

The news burst forth onto our screens and into the evening papers on Wednesday 27th February, but the story didn't start there. It started the week before.

By the middle of that week rumours were circulating of a general dissatisfaction about Doctor Who in the BBC, and at a Head of Departments meeting the programme's future was supposedly discussed. It was rumoured that the discussion centred around whether the programme was old and tired and should therefore be put to rest, or if it had some life left yet. Perhaps it would be a good idea if the programme had one final season and was then seen no more? So the discussion continued. Somehow news of the meeting spread out amongst some of the Doctor Who fans. Most of them dismissed the idea of the programme finishing as pure fantasy and speculation. After all it was quite unthinkable. But, they had been alerted.

On Tuesday 26th February the word went out. All those connected with the production of the planned season were being told that it had been cancelled. Effectively within one day the programme had gone from full production to cancellation, an incredibly swift action with no real warning. Colin Baker, the star of the programme, was not informed of the "Grade Axe" until the following day and Nicola Bryant heard about it from the Press. Few really believed the news at first and it was only when it was confirmed on Wednesday morning that things really started moving.

Many of those who found out acted straight away, informing the Press and ringing the BBC, some areas of which had still not been told of the decision when it seemed likely that they would have been. Enterprises for instance. The official reason for the season's cancellation was to give the series a "rest" and use the money that would have financed the series for other dramas. Unfortunately for the BBC it was well known

that Doctor Who was one of the cheapest drama productions and so, in view of the meeting the week before, the Grade Axe was seen as a ruse by the BBC to get rid of the programme. Fleet Street also took this point of view, and the BBC later admitted it in a roundabout way. The method of killing a show by postponing it for a year and then ending it is an old BBC trick, exemplified by the demise of "Blake's Seven".

News of the Grade Axe spread, through the BBC and through the Press. Finally the BBC issued a statement. Not surprisingly "John Owen's Newsround" covered the decision, but it is strange that it made the headlines of the "Six O'Clock News" and was an item in the "Nine O'Clock News", considering that this was a home-grown matter. Almost at once the public

leaving it to individuals. The British fans set Sunday as their day of decision.

By Thursday the Americans had declared that they could raise the money required to finance a new series. The BBC said they would consider this, and then then changed the reason for the "rest". It was not really financial at all but was a matter of resources. They argued that the programme took up vital studio space and man-power. Earlier on that day Ian Levine, a long standing fan of the series, had appeared on ITN's News At One on behalf of the Doctor Who Appreciation Society and fans in general. In no uncertain terms he demolished the Beeb's financial arguments and offered to put the fan's point to Michael Grade himself, who, incidentally had just gone on a skiing holiday to Switzerland.

interviews and as the papers were issued on Friday a possible problem manifested itself. Typically the Press had latched onto one person. In this case Ian Levine, and the campaign to save Doctor Who was in the slight danger of becoming Ian's fight to save the series. Ian tried his best to make the programme the subject of the articles, but he was too good copy. Certainly the Press interviewed other people but only Ian appeared in the end.

The BBC was noticeably keeping a low profile, too much so. In Breakfast Time it was impossible to ignore the Press reaction in the review of the papers. An interesting chat started about it which was suddenly cut short. Why was Frank Bough stopped, and by whom? Was the BBC really so embarrassed?

Friday showed no slacking in the future over the Grade Axe, but it still came as a great surprise when Bill Cotton, Managing Director of BBC Television and Michael Grade's boss, rang David Saunders to explain the BBC's stand. This coincided with a Press release, which itself was very revealing. In this extraordinary move the release stated "Another meticulous escape for fiction favourites" and "You can't kill a Time Lord". Were the BBC really admitting that the series had been for the chop after all? Bill Cotton and the release stated that they would "wait until the Autumn schedule (of 1986), and then Doctor Who will be a strong item in the mix". The Cotton Release continued, stating that the episodes would return to a length of 25 minutes, that they "would run the series for a greater number of weeks" and would "get the Doctor back onto familiar rails". The release finished by Bill Cotton stating "I am confident that Doctor Who has a great future on BBC1".

Thursday also saw an extraordinary reaction by the Press. They all condemned the decision to axe a series that only two years before the BBC had proudly declared an institution. It seemed that no matter how much the BBC protested no-one believed that the programme would return. The BBC switchboard was still flooded by angry calls, some of which were quite graphic in how they would deal with Michael Grade. Ouch! The Press and television had their teeth thoroughly stuck into the problem and were phoning up the various leading fans. David Saunders of the DWAS and Ian Levine were asked to appear on "Breakfast Time" on Friday with a live link to Michael Grade. David Howe, also of the DWAS, was to appear on "TV-AM", on condition that they could get a clip. They didn't, so he didn't. Then later on Thursday Breakfast Time cancelled the item, saying that they could not find Michael Grade. The Press conducted more

Ian Levine was due to appear on "Wogan" that night but then suddenly he was dropped. Orders from above again? Were the BBC really so sensitive about the whole issue? Whatever the reason the affect was to put an end, almost, to the fans' outcry. The release had after all stated that the programme was saved, but in fact it had said nothing new. There was still going to be an eighteen month gap, although the Press had quoted a BBC spokesman as saying that there would be



reacted, flooding the BBC with telephone calls. They too believed that the BBC was trying to kill the series. All through Wednesday the fans were contacting people, spreading the word. What some people may not have realised was that at that time there was no central control of fan activity. Most people were acting by themselves and it was only as the day drew on that people contacted each other to make sure they were not covering the same ground. At no time during the "crisis" was there any action resulting from organised fan activity on a large scale; it was spontaneous reaction by the public. The BBC did not seem to realise this, believing that the outcry was only from the fans and not from the public at large. The clubs and societies were of course not idle. They were preparing "battle plans", seeking the best routes of attack and gathering allies. Until the BBC made some further move or public reaction slowed down they would wait,

repeats of old Doctors, so only a battle had been won. The war was only just beginning. To the newspapers on Saturday of course there were congratulations all around. Well done Fleet Street. One cannot deny that they played a very important part in the Cotton Release but no single paper can claim it saved the series. Although "The Guardian" had an editorial asking why bother saving the series it also had an article with the headline "No reprieve for the Doctor". No one was looking the Guardian that anything had really been won. It was back to square one, almost. There would be at least one more season now.

The "News of the World" contacted Ian Levine on Saturday with the intention of printing an article showing that nothing had really been won. Ian directed the reporter away from him to other people, including the editor of this very magazine, but, surprise, surprise, the article ended up being about Ian's fight.

Sunday also saw THE meeting to decide what to do next. The obvious conclusion was that without the support of the Press there was not too much to be done, at the moment. The Cotton Release had done the trick, however unusual it had been. So was this a meeting of defeated people? No, certainly not. The most important factor, the survival of the show had been assured for another year and the BBC had had cause to sit up and take notice that they did have a public that they were responsible to after all. Lessons had been learnt by the Grade Ase and plans were agreed on. The fans out there is the wide world are rather like a huge hive. They have been stirred up, but have not begun to sting, yet. The phrase to remember for the future, if the need should arise again, is "You ain't seen nothing yet."

In conclusion then we must ask ourselves just what the reason for the Grade Ase really was. Was it a stunt to justify a licence increase? If so then it backfired. Was it a real effort to destroy the series? Possibly since the "non-rating conscious BBC employee" Michael Grade dismissed an audience of 6 million. Was it in fact, as was stated a chance for the series to catch its breath and have new life breathed into it? If so then the BBC had better ask itself why no-one believed it. Puzzling isn't it? Or is it...?

Ian Hendry

Ian Hendry died on 24th December 1984 aged 53. He had the starring role in "Police Surgeon" and when the series changed format and renamed "The Avengers" was one of the original lads. He is also known for his varied roles such as in "The Lotus Eaters" and films "Casino Royale" and "The Bitch".



Paul Darrow on location for the thriller serial "Maelstrom"

Blake's 7

BBC Enterprises have sold the entire four series to USA. It appears that each episode has been cut into two parts. This makes 104 twenty-five minute episodes rather than the 52 fifty minute versions shown in Britain. They are likely to appear on PBS around September.

First Doctor's wife has died

Mrs Heather Hartnell, widow of William Hartnell - the first "Doctor Who", died on 12th December 1984. When she attended the second "Doctor Who" convention, in 1978, she was the heart of everybody who met her. She was very taken by the friendliness and warm welcome she was given and subsequently attended many other conventions, including the BBC's Longest queue extravaganza and the NFI special "Doctor Who" event.

Heather Hartnell enjoying herself at the 1978 convention.



Star Trek IV

STAR TREK 4 all of the regulars have now signed for Trek 4 - William Shatner was the last due to negotiating for an excessive fee. Production seems set to go ahead in the summer. Leonard Nimoy will direct and Harve Bennett will produce.

USA and British Who Cons

Doctor Who fans, both sides of the Atlantic, have held conventions since the last issue of the magazine.

In London as hundred Doctor Who Appreciation Society members welcomed Fiona Cummings (Director), Michael Wisher (Davros), John Nathan-Turner (Current Producer), Sarah Lee (Secretary) and the Doctor in the form of Colin Baker.

Fiona Cummings told how for "Planet of Fire" the location of Lanzarote, was her idea. She had been on holiday there three years beforehand and shown the photographs she had taken to the Producer.

Michael Wisher had some wonderful stories to tell. These included one about how he was left, made up as Davros, in a studio corner for hours, helpless to do anything but sit there and hope he was not forgotten for too long.

Colin Baker showed how well he could get on with an audience and certainly won over many of the fans that were undecided about the new Doctor. One story he told concerned the title sequence. The photographs that were originally envisaged were of him winking, but unfortunately it seemed as though he was blowing a kiss as well. To overcome this a new set of photographs were taken with Colin simply smiling.

The Return to Oz

Walt Disney Productions most prestigious project to date THE RETURN TO OZ and is based on seven stories by L. Frank Baum and follows Dorothy's return to the wonderful world at the end of the rainbow. Because of her incessant stories of scarecrows, tin men and cowardly lions, Dorothy (played by Fariha Balk) has been transported to the local clinic for a check-up, as Aunt Em (Piper Laurie) is seriously concerned about her mental health. But Dorothy notes it there and with the help of a girl of her own age escapes from inside the clinic's prison like walls during a violent storm.

The strange landscapes of OZ and the castle chambers of Emerald City have all been marvelously recreated in Thom EMI Elstree Studios, which have previously been witness to the massive sets for such films as STAR WARS and INDIANA JONES and THE TEMPLE OF DOOM.

And so with an array of characters that we know and remember with affection and with a smashing story THE RETURN TO OZ should provide an awe-inspiring slice of entertainment.

The Cast includes Fariha Balk as Dorothy, Sophie Ward as the wicked Mombi, Nichol Williamson as Dr Worley, a dubious physician, Piper Laurie as Aunt Em, Jean Marsh

Labyrinth

LABYRINTH has been scripted for Muppet Man Jim Henson by Monty Python man Terry Jones.

A whimsical, gothic fantasy is what it's all about, and it's not a follow-up to THE DARK CRYSTAL, but is a puppet film however this time Jim plans to interlay it with human characters. Brian Froud from THE DARK CRYSTAL endorses as production designer.

More of Moore

Bond's next outing, fourteenth in the long-lasting caper adventure, had had to have its title shortened: "From a View to a Kill" to merely "A View to a Kill". Apparently poor old Dunn Duran couldn't fit the longer title in as a lyric to their theme song.

After sneering the rushes, word is that dear old cuntry is none too happy with Roger's somewhat worn appearance of late. Well we all have to get old sometime, don't we Mr. Broccoli!

Timeslip

No, not the children's television classic of the 1970's involving time "bubbles" but a new programme of series futuristic thrillers from Yorkshire Television. A half hour pilot was filmed in October/November last year, subtitled "The Block". The series concerns a computer "hecker", in this case John Taylor of Duren Duren, hacking into the future and on his screen is a tale of the future. The pilot is set 50 to 60 years from now where the computers are taking over. We follow the exploits of two characters, played by Jeff Harding, an American, and Virginia Hey, an Australian, as the computer starts shutting down lifts and closing doors.

It was filmed at Leeds Bradford airfield airport and involved some futuristic sets and a specially customised car.

The series has not yet been scheduled here in Britain and it looks like we shall have to wait at least until September. The USA has already had their

last chance to see the pilot in January, on Home Box Office. If you saw it do write and tell us what you thought of it



Dan Dare

That old Eagle comic strip, Dan Dare, is being turned into a television series. Producer, Colin Frewin, who at one time worked on the "Avengers" has already got together a script for seven 30 minute episodes. The script is by David Ambrose who is best known for his play "Alternative Three", which was shown about ten years ago. As well as featuring Dan Dare himself, this series includes Digby, Hulk, Pheme and the dreaded Mecon, Dan Dare's Droids. While the characters are from the comic strip the story is not. It is set in the 1950's and is to be shot on location in Scotland and in a studio at London, all on film. Casting and location filming is expected to take place in the next month or so.

Thanks are due to John Gurin, Nick Preece and Producer, Colin Frewin, for the above information.

STARMAN

Reviewed by Keith Kole

Now correct me if I'm wrong, but there have been at least three comic book heroes and two motion picture characters called Starman; but the most recent incarnation of this extraterrestrial title appears in the new John Carpenter film, *Starman*.

Starman is a departure for director Carpenter in that it is a bit of a love story and bears little resemblance to his previous thrillers; such as, *Halloween*, *Escape from New York*, and *The Thing*. Can an alien intelligence find love with the widow of the man whose form he has taken? Instead of depicting the everyman-type of hero thrust into a premarital situation, Carpenter makes the extraordinary adjust to the ordinary in an everyman disguise.

Jeff Bridges (son of Lloyd and brother to Beau Bridges) plays the title role with a refreshing alien quirkiness. He never quite manages to fit in or convince that he is even human. One of the film's essential elements is much the same as Nicholas Meyer's *Time After Time* in which H.G. Wells discovers the wonders of contemporary life from a Victorian perspective. *Starman* is always discovering new wonders of this primitive Earth and exaggerates them to outrageous extremes,

powering those things that pass as representations of the American mentality. As an example, he speeds through a yellow traffic light causing an accident, and justifies himself by observing to his Earthly companion, "Red means stop. Green, go. Yellow, go very fast."

The kidnapped Earth woman

Ark. To me, there is something very appealing about this young lady. She brings a freckled, down-to-earth quality to her role as she explains that food is like fuel for a car "Hunger, is an emptiness inside. Do you understand?" she asks.

"Yes," the alien replies, "I feel empty."



who later falls in love with the starman (and it's no wonder since he is a doppelganger of her late husband) as she helps him in his cross-country rendezvous to his mothership played by the spunky Karen Allen from *Raiders of the Lost*

While attempting to rendezvous with his ship before he dies, *Starman* is chased by the U.S. government led by a scientist (portrayed by Charles Martin Smith) who seeks to understand the extraterrestrial

rather than dissect him. If you said this sounds very much like Steven Spielberg's *E.T.*, you are quite correct. The plot is almost exactly the same. In fact, the popular press is comparing it too readily, calling it an *E.T.* for adults, and so the movie suffers the fate of being labelled as unoriginal. But *Starman* is a different story: not only because the language is stronger and more skin is shown, (this is the only science fiction film, I know of, containing a toilet scene...instrumental in the alien's education) but because it is a film that should be viewed on its own, and not merely a companion to another work.

I liked *Starman* very much. Although I wasn't convinced by his explanation of why humanity deserves to survive, or the Mid-Western wife's definition of love, these moments were nice. I left the theatre possessing a gift I am not often enough given at the movies. *Starman* made me feel good.

One final note of interest; *Starman* legitimately blends science fiction with science fact. The initial contact with Earth comes via interception of the Voyager probe. The Voyager missions were sent out towards deep space for the purpose of contacting alien intelligence. How many movie aliens have been unwanted and unwelcome? Well, this one "was invited" as the film invokes.

Intiguing [2]

Spielberg

It is possible that Lucasfilm may not be able to have Steven Spielberg for the next STAR WARS film. He is preparing to shoot PETER PAN in London's EMI studios in March. I can definitely and categorically say that Michael Jackson is a no no for the lead role and the search is on for a 10-year-old male...any offers?

Spielberg is also involved in another makeup effects extravaganza, called THE GOONES directed by Richard Donner. It will be released by Warner Bros later in the year.



Right of Reply

Our ever figurative and intrepid correspondent, John Curtin, managed to track Richard Franklin down in Stockholm recently to ask him his opinion of the numerous criticisms expressed about his 'Recall UNIT' play. (reviewed in the last issue) which among other things has been accused of political overtones. Just or Unjust? Mr Franklin had very little to say on that subject, but plenty on the possible future development of the play. "It was not really political, and for anyone who thought so look the play far too seriously. I would in fact like to coordinate a convention in England centred around the play, with possible venues of either London or Liverpool, as accessibility for the fans would be a lot easier". And who would Richard envisage in the cast? "Well I would certainly like both John Lowe and Nicholas Courtney, and possibly one or more of the Doctors". Even those non-purists amongst us must agree this to be quite a courageous idea, as the play was by no means a success at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. We can be assured, however, that whilst Richard Franklin is involved his drive and enthusiasm for the project will ensure that the UNIT saga will continue.

Morons From Outer Space

Mel Smith has just completed MORONS FROM OUTER SPACE with Giff Rhys Jones. In MORONS FROM OUTER SPACE, Mel plays one of four very ordinary aliens whose decrepit spacecraft crashes on Earth landing them in various hilarious misadventures.

Baby

BABY is a new shaggy dinosaur story from Walt Disney Productions, it will be a Touchstone film which is the new mature arm of Disney film productions. It is hoped the \$13 million production will repeat the success of SPLASH last year, and the filmmakers are adamant that although the film features a cute dinosaur they are certainly not trying to make a cute film, which is quite understandable as no one wants a repeat of the now infamous turkey THE BLACK HOLE.

The story is written by newcomers Clifford and Ellen Green, and revolves around a couple played by William Katt and Sean Young, who in-between discovering a living family of Brontosaurus deep in the African jungle, (she's a palaeontologist, he's a sport writer constantly quarrel between each other. The villain of the piece is Patrick McGeehan who wants the discovery credit for himself and will go to any lengths to make sure there is none around to contradict his claim. Producing the film is Jonathan Taplin whose most recent film is UNDER FIRE.

The film will be treated to an extensive promotional campaign to equal that of the \$5 million dollar ad budget for SPLASH. We can hopefully look forward to an out-and-out adventure.

Santa Claus: The Movie

Filming for SANTA CLAUS: THE MOVIE has now finished for Alexander and Iya Seikang on Pinewood's largest stages. Dudley Moore heads the cast of the 50 million-dollar spectacular along with John Lithgow, David Huddleston, Burgess Meredith and Betsy Judy Cornwell, Don Estelle and Melvyn Hayes. The director is Jeanot (Superior) Szewar. However you will have to wait until Yuletide '85 to see the movie.



"GREMLINS"

Reviewed by Emma Josling

One of the hottest films around over the Christmas period, together with "Ghostbusters", "Gremlins" provides general all round entertainment. It contains the basic components necessary for a box office hit, which indeed it has been, despite being preceded by the usual hype that has winged its way across the Atlantic. If, for some reason, you refused to let curiosity get the better of you and weren't wooed into the cinema by scores of posters and displays of various cute, furry animals, you will be wondering what magic the film holds to generate such excitement.

The fun begins when Billy's friend, Pete, accidentally spills water on Gizmo from a paintbrush jar. The effect is incredible. Gizmo reacts in the most abrupt manner by body-popping into a bulging, bulbous oddity and multiplying into five not-so-cute versions of himself. These horrendous little nasties thus embark on a trail of destruction, performing a series of mischievous pranks such as entwining the bewildered family dog in Christmas tree lights, interfering with traffic lights and meddling with car brakes. Hence they demonstrate the definition of GREMLINS: "mischievous sprites alleged to cause mishaps".

However, after this playfulness (?) the gremlins turn nasty. This is the point

when the plot loses its credibility as the gremlins become totally unruly and go berserk, committing the kind of violence normally confined to soccer terraces! Battle commences in the kitchen as Mrs. Peltzer is confronted by the wicked creatures gallily demolishing her homemade gingerbread-men. All hell is let loose - food blenders whirr and microwaves crackle - as she struggles against knife-wielding counter attacks and attempted strangulation.

Overall the cute characters and banal plot would be far more appreciated by those aged under 15, but it is instead limited to those who may well be more scathing. A few feeble moments don't strengthen the film, such as Katz's admission that she associates Christmas with her father's untimely and most peculiar death (were we really meant to be sympathetic?), but these are probably overlooked in the general fantasy and fun of the film. Indeed worthy entertainment (any production containing Steven Spielberg's name must be worth a go), and although any film hyped and reviewed in such excess should be approached with caution "Gremlins" was not so much of a let-down as anticipated. Certainly light hearted enjoyment which surely could never fail to delight cinema goers.

STAR TREK CON-NED!

Reporter Margaret L. Richardson

Over the weekend of 24th-26th August, of last year, the 10th official British Star Trek Convention took place. The venue was the Coast Hotel, Newcastle upon Tyne. Attending were some 500 Star Trek fans from all walks of life, including some from other parts of the world such as America and Germany.

Galileo Con Jax it was officially known was the second of the two main Star Trek conventions held in Britain during 1994. The first British Star Trek Con was in September 1994, thus making '94 the 10th Anniversary of British ST Conventions. This anniversary was celebrated at Galileo by having a photo display of past conventions, spanning the last 10 years.

During the course of the convention the attendees were treated to a variety of programmed events, such as a Fancy Dress Parade and a Federation Ball (in Universe style). Entries for these included 'Eise Clog (the Enterprises) cleaning lady', Lucy Skywalker (other sister to Leia and Luke, from Star Wars), and a group that re-enacted the blowing up of the Enterprise, complete with self-directed sequence. There were also showings of Star Trek episodes and Star Trek movies. I ended up in a variety of Science Fiction films. Other events were an Art and Craft (display) competition for fans with an artistic bent, and an auction where Star Trek (and SF) fans could purchase rare merchandise, provided the bid bank balance could stand the strain. And, of course, there was the Saturday Night Disco. Any ST fan will tell you that a convention wasn't complete without the traditional Saturday night gymkhana (moment in the most possible way).

Special Guests of Honour at Galileo were, Star Trek's creator,

Lucy Skywalker

Gene Roddenberry and Majel Barrett-Roddenberry. Aside from being Mrs Roddenberry, Majel also portrayed the character of Nurse Christine Chapel in the Star Trek television series, and voiced the character for the first ST movie, Star Trek: The Motion Picture being produced by ST Chapel for this movie).

The following extracts are taken from a 'Question and Answer' session given by Mr and Mrs Roddenberry during the convention and relates some of their views and beliefs.

Q. You please don't be shy. Ask whatever you want to ask and we'll try to give you honest answers. Q'll start the ball rolling. When did you get the very first idea that this was going to be more than just one of many ideas that fit across the board? That it was going to become a television series?

A. Gene: Well, at first I don't know it would be... Starring in the beginning of course, what I was trying to do was to find a format in which I could write my comments. Television in the United States, as a terribly sensitive. You really cannot write about anything important. They'll take it out. They're afraid they'll offend someone. I thought of Jonathan Swift, when he wanted to write about corrupt Prime Ministers, wrote satirical novels, and all of that, decided to do it. I thought, 'Gee, a Travel Science Fiction actually is a marvelous place for comment. You can invent any place you want, any situation or economics and so I said, "Who shouldn't I be that?" I'd always loved science fiction, always wanted to do it, and thought I might be able to do it better than I do now. To me too much science fiction has been about gadgets and not enough about people. People in what drama is it was really an attempt to, so I can make a statement about Vietnam and about morality, and about things in life that I believe in.

As to when we knew it was becoming popular - I think they will agree with me - we knew almost immediately we would have a small group of people who loved it but we never were able to get a good audience rating while I was on the air. My own father, the night Star Trek premiered on television, accused himself, went out, walked up and down the street and spoke to all the neighbours (laugh). Space Travel in those days was considered wild fantasy, something nobody would do. I



Gene Roddenberry

guess we didn't - I'll talk about this in my speech, about meeting Arthur Clarke and all that, but I wish I could after man landed on the Moon that space travel began to be accepted and we became popular. Star Trek show two or three times as many people on its re-runs as it did on its

initial network ratings. Ain't that the way? Curiouser?

Q. Have you ever had to suffer any allegations of totalitarian on the makeup of the Enterprise crew? GR: Oh, I suppose that's possible

Kirk and Spock play three-dimensional chess



For the tenth year running.

tolerance, except I think if you put yourself in the same situation you'll realize that, with only so many speaking parts you are able to have, you have to divide it up. I wanted, loved to have had, Japanese, Chinese, and all of that. I picked the name Spock because it seemed to me that was sort of Asian. I had to put Chekov in the second year because the Communist Youth newspaper had written, "Oh, the ugly Americans have done it again. We were the first in space now they're doing a space series and there are no Russians." I read that and thought "Jesus Christ, they're right" as I wrote in Chekov and wrote to the Communist newspaper saying, "You take are perfectly right, I apologise" and my apology was shown in the paper after that. Unfortunately, they didn't answer: if they had, I would have loved to have had correspondence on that. The only thing about totalitarianism we got that I don't agree with is often they say, "You don't think women as equals in the show." What I think people forgot was when I started the show you did not have... otherwise



Gene Roddenberry and Majel Barrett-Roddenberry

no such thing as "Women's Lib". The limits had not been invented. Sexual equality was not widely believed. I believed in sexual equality and put a woman second in command of the ship as the first pilot. It was this young lady (referring to Majel Barrett), but the

network would not accept that. Not just the network. I have at times the audience surveys - when they bring people in, as an overall group, to see the show. The women were writing, "Who does she think she is?" We're not all bitches, and there's forward thinking and so on. Sexual equality came as a surprise to many people. There are many things I wish I had done. I would love to have had a chance, had the series gone on, to talk about the equality of sexual life-styles and all manner of things like that. In these years you can only do so much.

Q. Star Trek was originally for adults wasn't it...?
GR: No, not totally.

Q. In Britain it's screened in the children's hour with some censorship by the BBC, how do you feel about that?
GR: I feel it would be very unusual if two countries were speaking the same language, had exactly the same idea of what is violent, what is right and what isn't. Inside the show or what I thought was proper, for moral systems and value systems that I knew. My feelings are that I disagree with the BBC about "The Enterprise". Dialogue was much "Empathic" to me was a beautiful story. There is hate and pain in it, but overriding all the hurt and pain you have this woman who is denying the hurt and pain onto herself, and suffering herself to give it from somebody else. If someone says to me, "You can't have hurt and pain", I say, "Nonsense!" Suffering and pain are a part of life. They should be handled, and handled well. I feel the same way about violence and me. My objection to violence and sex on the shows where I go on to a wife and someone says, "Well, if going slow now, why don't you have a full fight, or something?" They put it in to raise the ratings. I believe violence is a part of life. I think one of the reasons why people were willing to go into the last war is that death is presented as such a lovely thing in war, when you're

supposedly giving you all for your country. That's not how I feel! I know! Men lie out there and scream their guts out for hours, in agony. If you're going to violence do it that way. Then people will say, "Well, yes, I don't want our boys to do that." And see the same way. I see nothing wrong with sex. I think copulation is a lovely thing. I think, however, you just don't have your tits, or something, because the film happens to be going slow at that moment. At the same time, if you have a story where that is a part of the story, and necessary to it, and done well and properly, then I think it should be in. Those to me are the tests. The reason you have, particularly in American television, so much sex and violence or so much emphasis on it, is by taking away everything else you might write about - war, religion, science, labour, management, etc. It's all you have left to get a story going. To me the true test is a concept of that provides us writing about these things. I could go on for hours on this (with a laugh). I'll tell you a story about how my feelings go. There was a convention in the United States where, for my total surprise a young lady came out nude, and she was called as "The Costume NCS". Wouldn't Let Mr Roddenberry Use! (laugh) I say

Eise Clog





that, and perhaps they shouldn't have done it. At the same time I said I was more outraged at the people who came out in costumes with zip guns, and weaponry, rather than a simple human body. That's how I feel about that.

MB: We may have lost a viewer though.

GR: We may have lost a Viewer (laugh)

Comment from audience: Or won one!

GR: Yeah, lost one, won one.

MB: But the fact that the thing came out, originally when they scheduled it, at eight o'clock, or was the first year here? That sort of indicates what they expect, or who they expect to watch it, and I don't think it was until the re-run came, it came out at six o'clock, that we found out that early our audience was that young. I mean a great deal, a great number of them. They had put it on.

I remember the last year they had finally said they were going to put it on at ten o'clock on Friday evenings. Well, ten o'clock on Friday evenings the only person in

front of the TV is Aunt Maud in Iowa, really a foreign state! She wouldn't watch the show! We produced it live in her living room! So our chances of going on with the show for the next year were two — slim and none. They were going to give us Monday nights at eight o'clock and I remember we thought, "Oh boy, this'll be absolutely lamerest!" When they took that away then, of course, we were dead again. I think the networks sort of decided where they thought it was going to go, and they thought maybe adults would watch it at ten o'clock. I don't think Gene particularly wrote it for a ten o'clock audience, or for a six o'clock audience.

A ball arrived shortly after this and Mr and Mrs Roddenberry excused themselves, thanked everyone for their attention, and left for an interview with the local television studio.

Both Gene and Majel were well received by their fans and very much loved. Gene displayed a great sense of humour that was to be expected from the creator of Star Trek, while Majel added a touch of charm and grace to the whole weekend.



Above: Majel Barrett
Below: A scene from
"The Motion Picture"



U.F.O.

Justin Richards considers UFO in the light of today's standards and expectations

Gerry Anderson's 1969 series *UFO* is remembered for several reasons. It was the first Anderson live-action series; it embraced the seeds of the *Space 1999* series that it was, somewhat later, to evolve into, and itself borrowed ideas from its predecessor *Captain Scarlet*; it featured an incredible submarine-cum-fighter 'plane' that had 'SkyDiver' written down one side, but we never saw what was written down the other; it sported *Thunderbirds*-style incidental music by the late Barry Gray, special effects by Derek Meddings that stand up well to the effects he produces over a decade later, and one of the best edited title sequences in television history.

Even when *UFO* was originally screened the series received scant attention, and now gets even less coverage. Indeed, what information is available (a quick look from tinsie 'Cygnus Alpha', a cursory article in *TV Sci Fi Monthly* that insisted that the series was made by 'Jerry Anderson', and an episode listing from 'Starlog' that either tells too much or too little about

each story) is usually inaccurate. The recent decision by Channel Four not to screen the entire series (and the decision by Anderson that either the entire series would be shown, or none of it would) means that *UFO* remains merely a fond (or not so fond) memory. Memories too are inaccurate, and most people tend only to recall 'the one where ...'. Certainly some episodes of *UFO* were far more memorable than others – *Ordeal* for example, in which Paul Foster is captured by the Aliens; *Survival*, in which Paul Foster finds himself fighting for his life on the moon, abandoned by the Moonbase crew and with only a similarly stranded Alien for help; *Exposed*, in which Paul Foster is recruited to SHADO after his 'plane is buzzed by a UFO ... Whether these stories are remembered because they are the best is debatable, but they are all 'typical' and they were all written by script editor Tony Barwick. They are also uncontroversial, unlike some of the later episodes which ITV showed only late at night, fearing complaints about blood,



injections, and even LSD trips. To say that *UFO*, by the end of its run, was a sophisticated programme, especially by late sixties/early seventies television science fiction standards is a fairly safe argument. To say that it started as a sophisticated piece of adult entertainment is far more controversial, but only slightly less true.

The problem was of course that the people who watched television when *UFO* was first shown did not expect or want such sophistication. They could not relate their ideas of science fiction on television to a show that spent a whole episode examining the private life of one of the characters and the breakdown of his marriage because of his job; they could understand a story about a man going mad because of an alien moon-rock and seeing cowboys on Moonbase, but when the next victim sees Aliens which the viewer is denied sight of, and finally Straker himself undergoes a nightmare trip into his own subconscious, finding himself taking part in one of his own films which concerns the fight against UFOs, and watching rushes of film which are in fact his own life, the viewers of 1970 became far too confused to examine their own ideas of reality/fiction. When Tony Barwick (yes, Tony again) wrote that episode – *Mind-bender* – he allowed us a look at the sets for *UFO*, a glimpse of a director's assistant called Sylvia, and a scene in which Paul Foster (the viewer's favourite action man of SHADO) insisted that he was really an actor called Michael, and that the whole SHADO set up was really about 'pretty pictures for the masses'. The masses were happy with the pretty pictures, with sophisticated scripts, they were not. It is no accident that when Barwick re-used some of his *Mind-bender* ideas for an episode of *The*

Foster watches the box while Freeman sucks a lollypop.





Commander Straker looks for the strings on one of his puppet-like personnel.

Professionals (A Man Called Quinn, with Del Henney guest-starring) he kept the premise but lost most of the surrealism, and all of the subtlety.

S.H.A.D.O.

But what was UFO? Basically it was a series concerning SHADO—the Supreme Headquarters Alien Defence Organisation—and its fight against aliens that arrive on earth in their pyramid-like UFOs which made a noise which is never forgotten, and kidnap people. The Alien race is apparently dying out, and they can survive only by transplant surgery using healthy human organs. To help in its fight, SHADO is secret, its Control being situated beneath a film studio which Ed Straker the SHADO commander, 'runs'; SHADO also has amongst its hardware a fleet of SkyDiver submarines, a herd of large, tracked, heavily armoured land vehicles called 'Mobiles', a base on the moon from where Interceptors are launched to attack incoming UFOs, and a tracking satellite called SID (Space Intruder Detector) which can remain unfappable even when in *Reflections in the Water* he is shot down by a UFO, never to appear again... SHADO was run by Straker (Ed Bishop), under the watchful eye of General Henderson (Grant Taylor), with help from Colonel Alec Freeman (George Sewell), Paul Foster (Michael Billington), Veronica Lake (Wanda Ventham), with Lieutenant Gay Ellis (Gabrielle Drake) on Moonbase, and Captains Peter Carlin (Peter Gorden)

and later Lew Waterman (Gary Meyers) on SkyDiver One.

The regular cast was large. In addition to the above, SHADO was consistently manned by the same team throughout the twenty-six episodes of UFO's run. That said, while the lesser cast remained largely unchanged, during the break between episodes 18 and the rest (presumably what was to have been the second series was curtailed) Gabrielle Drake, George Sewell and Peter Gorden all left the series. George Sewell maintains that this was because they were not warned that there would be a second series and had other commitments, and there seems no reason to doubt this. The gaps were filled quite

Wanda Ventham as a glamorous Virginia Lake.



well, and from inside the series rather than merely recruiting new SHADO operatives (no easy task judging by Paul Foster's initiation in *Exposed*)—Waterman takes over SkyDiver, having previously been an astronaut on Moonbase, and having commanded SkyDiver on occasions already (*Ordeal* and *Court Martial*, for example). Gay Ellis's position on Moonbase is not filled, her immediate subordinates Nina Barry and Joan Harrington take over her duties. To replace Freeman, Foster is given even more focus and Colonel Lake becomes much more of a foreground character.

Production Standards

The way that the cast shuffling was handled is perhaps typical of the production standards of UFO; on the one hand there is a lot of care put into it all, on the other, there is the total lack of explanation for the changes. Some aspects of UFO were brilliantly conceived and executed, others were just laughable. The model work is excellent, but the same shots of Mobiles, Interceptors, SkyDiver and later the Moonbase Ground Defence Systems are used over and over. SHADO goes out of its way to remain secret—Foster is put on trial for leaking rather petty information, and anyone with contact with Aliens, UFOs, SHADO, etc, has to go through what Straker never quite manages to call 'the amnesia procedure'. Yet SHADO's air-transport has 'SHADAIR' printed all over it, and the Mobiles plainly bear the logo: 'SHADO' followed by the number of the vehicle. The series is supposedly set initially in 1980, when the British all wear strange clothes, drive sleek cars on the right-hand side of the road and have the most peculiar haircuts—yet while Paul Foster gives the date as April 1981 in *Survival*, two stories later astronaut Bradley comments on the 1984 vintage of the wine he is drinking (*Computer Affair*). In the same story an astronaut is killed when his Interceptor is in collision with a UFO, and the same astronaut has been manning the Interceptors since the first episode, *Identified*. One of the other plots is Waterman, later to be promoted. But with all the cast consistency, in *Timebush* a totally unknown operative, Turner, is the main character beside Straker and yet Lake is well known to them both. That this is mainly to allow for the playing of the role by a guest star—Patrick Allen—is all too apparent, as is Alexis Kanner's appearance on Moonbase in *The Cat with Ten Lives*.

Perhaps the oddest treatment of all is given to the SkyDiver submarines. In the first episode, Straker goes out of his way to explain to the audience that SHADO is equipped with a fleet of such submarines.



One of SHADO's mobiles

But we only see one of them, SkyDiver One. It is not until much later than any other is mentioned – SkyDiver Six is on patrol in one episode, while in the penultimate story, *The Psychobombs*, SkyDiver Three is actually destroyed by one of the human bombs. Of course, it is sensible to highlight just one of the submarines, so that we can get to know its crew better (again all regulars, from Navigator Jeremy Wilton to the crew of Jon Kelly and Georgina Moon. Later on Anouska Hempel also transfers from her duties at SHADO Control). But the dialogue often gives a conflicting set of impressions – in *Court Martial*, Foster is accused of leaking the refuelling rendezvous of “a SkyDiver submarine” to the press, yet when Waterman appears to give evidence, he describes himself as

“at present commanding SkyDiver” as if it is the only one, and no number is ever attached to the vessel in question. Whatever part of the world it is needed, it is almost always Sky One that shoots down or locates the offending UFO.

But these are minor quibbles given the overall thread of continuity. Colonel Paul Foster in particular is given a chance to progress as a character from the impetuous test pilot we meet in *Exposed*, through the loyal SHADO agent to the right-hand man to Straker, replacing Freeman in this respect.

Straker

Much criticism has been levelled at Ed Bishop's portrayal of Ed Straker, again

this is largely a matter of misunderstanding the character, or just plain not seeing the relevant episodes due to the vagaries of ITV scheduling. On the surface, Straker is indeed the hard, no-nonsense, almost robotically-devoted senior officer, but he is answerable to Henderson (who he feels, we learn late on, should have been given the job of SHADO commander originally) and there is definite friction there, especially over budgets and over Foster's treatment at and after his trial. Straker may not drink alcohol – a dramatic cliché if ever there was one – but he smokes non-stop when under stress, and when he tells Alec Freeman that he does not drink because of his strength of will, Freeman points out that sometimes it takes more strength of will to do the drinking. While Straker pre-

sents the unflappable image to his colleagues, the facade is on occasion allowed to crack in the presence of the viewers; *Confetti Check A-OK* is a flashback story detailing his marital problems, his son's potentially fatal car accident, and the pressures involved in setting up SHADO in the first place. In *Mindbender* we have to sit with Straker as he watches the tragedies of his life – his near death at the 'hands' of a UFO on the way to Chequers to finalise the SHADO foundation, his son's accident and his wife's resulting breakdown. In *Tenelash* Straker and Veronica Lake

battle alone against Turner who has been taught to manipulate time by the Aliens, and has frozen SHADO control at a single moment until his allies can arrive; in this story nothing is clearer than Straker's devotion to his job and his colleagues. Straker relies on computer predictions and evaluations for almost everything, and that Freeman is on hand mainly to balance the electronic decision-making process with a more human one is undeniable. In *Flightpath* Freeman releases Roper (George Cole) from custody earlier than ordered out of a sense of fair play, and in *Computer*

Affair (in which Gay Ellis and Astronaut Bradley are allowed to develop a personal relationship that is not merely human interest to pad out the plot, but integral to that plot) Freeman offers his resignation when he feels that Straker is relying on computers to the exclusion of humanity and feeling (that the resignation is later rescinded is Freeman's success, for a second computer evaluation proves his initial feelings to have been correct). The 'sting' in the tail is when Bradley 'phones Freeman from a nightclub to confess that the basis for the first computer report – his love for Ellis – has proved to be right. It is this revelation that actually persuades Freeman to stay with SHADO.

Ed Bishop's much criticised portrayal of Ed Straker



Sophisticated Scripts

The level of scripting for *UFO* was consistently high despite, or more probably because of, the restrictions of the format. Even in straightforward tales like that of *Survival* parallels are drawn – and not always comfortable ones. While Foster finds that the Alien who has killed one of his friends is also capable of saving life, Bradley refuses at first to take on the job of Moonbase Commander because he is black; he feels that even if no one openly resents his race, such resentment may surface under stress – the example he cites of sending a man out on the moon, possibly to his death is all the more poignant given Roper's death under similar circumstances two stories previously. *UFO*'s progression was in many ways dependent upon seeing all the episodes, and in the right order, and for this reason alone Channel Four's attempt only partially to screen the series is better off dead.

That *UFO* demanded a certain effort from its audience in order to understand it is obvious from viewing more than a few episodes. If you missed the end of *Survival*, for example, when Foster discovers that his girlfriend has been told that he is dead and they split up after an argument about the relative importance of his job and his love life, then his memories of flirting in the following story *Deltek Affair*, seem shallow and without the meaning they are intended to have. The writing was always a level higher than the audience expected or realised.

Ordeal is remembered as a story that cops out at the end as Foster realises that he has dreamed it all in a sauna bath. This does not in fact detract from the 'dream' story, which concludes in the same way in the sauna with Foster prevented (narrowly) from choking on his own vomit, be it his food or the oxygenated liquid that the aliens breath for space travel (they age rapidly to death when exposed to the atmosphere, just



Destined to die. Sonja Fox as Carol Roper.

as their craft disintegrate after too long on earth, except when under water). In fact the dream is set up as such throughout the episode, when Foster reports to the health farm at seven in the morning, he has been at a party until four-thirty, drinking heavily (last seen wrapped round the hostess, who responds to his self pity at the early start by saying "You know what you need, don't you?" Foster's eyes widen hopefully and he cuddles closer... "An alarm clock" she tells him. The next shot is of the sad alarm clock exploding metaphorically beside Foster's sleeping head). As Foster is interviewed by the doctor, and later in the sauna, he hears only the music from the disco, and sees the flashing lights before passing out. Such almost subliminal images are employed a lot – yet another strain on the less than dedicated viewer; if the audience fails to register the throwaway remarks about the dog food commercial being made in

Michael Jayston as Russ.



the studios 'upstairs' in *The Cat With Ten Lives*, then when Colonel Lake suggests using the dogs to Straker, and Straker sees a quick flash in his mind's eye of the dogs he has seen on the set, the viewer will be confused, but it is the dogs that kill the Cat, freeing Jim Regan (Alexis Kanner) from the control of the Alien whose mind is inside the animal. *The Cat With Ten Lives* adds another dimension to the possibilities of the nature of the Aliens – which is never fully discovered – postulating that they use fully donated bodies rather than just replacing certain organs, and that the Aliens themselves are only the minds. Throughout we learn about the enemy only as SHADO learns.

Schedulers' handling

The final UFO story (before the production team moved on to *The Protectors*, a much shorter and cheaper programme), *The Long Sleep*, takes place largely in flashback as Tessa Wyatt's character – Catherine Ross – awakes from a coma and recalls her discovery ten years earlier of an Alien bomb which she and her boyfriend sabotaged while high on LSD. ITV have only shown this episode once, at ten-thirty at night, midweek – ostensibly because of the sepi-toned, slow-motion LSD trip sequences, but probably as much because of Catherine's attempted rape by a lorry driver whose help she tries to enlist; this attitude is, sadly, indicative of the treatment that UFO received at the hands of the independent channel, and also abroad (Australia heavily cut some episodes and showed others late, or not at all). The blame for the bad reception of the series can largely be laid at the door of those who denied us the chance to see it as a coherent whole, as was meant. Certainly with the sophistication of television since 1970, it would receive a far more generous reception now, being superior to its offspring *Space 1999* in almost every way – *Space 1999* showed how to restrict an exciting and wide format, UFO started with the restricted format, but used it to the full and then some. After all, a series that could attract such talents as David Tomblin, Alan Fennell, Dennis Spooner, Terence Footy, Jean Marsh, Michael Jayston, Susan Jameson, John Stratton, David Collings and all the others mentioned (and many not mentioned here at all) must have had something about it. Should we ever get the chance to see the series as we were meant to, we shall no doubt find out what that 'something' was. I doubt we'll ever find out what it says on the other side of SkyDriver though.



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MEMORIES OF A SURVIVOR



An Interview With VERE LORRIMER by Andrew Sewell

Memories are 'The mental capacity or faculty of retaining and reviving impressions'. In its 52 episodes spread over a period of four years, the BBC's science-fiction adventure series *Blake's 7* has certainly in its brief existence attracted a fair share of memorabilia. From the series' outset, it has always attracted a great deal of interest and attention. Not all was welcome: indeed the national tabloids often cast a cuffing critical eye upon the programme, having something derogatory to write to *Blake* nearly every week. A common view taken was 'More boring and repetitive adventures with those cardboard characters in their phoney space machines - another fifty minutes of yarf'. Despite the somewhat unprecedented flak that the programme received, it consistently enjoyed considerable high audience ratings of around 9-10 million. It also attracted a hard core of dedicated followers who created societies dedicated solely to the appreciation of the programme. Even four years after its final transmission it is still unreservedly a very popular programme.

So where does the attraction lie in a series whose main theme concerns itself primarily with

the exploits of an oddball bunch of galactic rebels fighting against an evil and malign Federation, who are aptly dressed in black and wear gas masks.

To understand a little you must cast your mind back and examine the original conceptions of the series, and how the subsequent development and interpretation of the characters played such an integral part in the show's phenomenal success, not only on British television but now also in America.

Recently in the hallowed halls of the BBC, I spoke to Vere Lorrimer, director of a staggering twelve episodes in total and producer of *Blake's 7* final and perhaps most memorable of years, if only for the final episodes now infamous shockending. Who better to ask for his thoughts on the characters, and memories of the actors who portrayed them. Vere firstly explained how it was he had become involved with *Blake's 7*, which was indeed a strange progression to make for a director who at that point was more associated with crime series. "I had never been involved in science-fiction stories ever before. It occurred because I had become one of the regular directors of police dramas. I directed more episodes of *Dixon of Dock Green* than any other director had ever done, about 30 episodes in all. I also did a lot of *Z Cars* and *Softly Softly Task Force*, and for a period of about six years I did nothing but crime

dramas, and so I became closely identified with this type of programme. So one day I said to Ronnie Marsh, who was then Head of the Series Department - 'Ronnie I would very much welcome a complete change, not that I'm sick of it, but I'm getting a bit tired as a crime director'. So he said 'I have something completely new coming up called *Blake's 7*' - no one had ever heard of it - so he briefly explained that it was about space and high adventure, and I thought 'Gosh that sounds exciting, that would be very very nice, I would like to do that'. Ronnie agreed and so asked the producer, who was then David Maloney, who said by all means he would be delighted for me to work on it, and so it was. I ended up directing four episodes in each of the first three series, and when it was decided to do a fourth series, David had by then moved on to producing something else. As I was by then an old hand at it, and still enjoying it immensely, I was offered the job of producing *Blake's 7* final year - an opportunity I jumped at."

"At no time did we introduce brutality or any gratuitous violence."

A popular point of contention amongst many a critic, was whether *Blake's 7* was intended as just another show for the children, or if its appeal was

aimed to encompass a much wider audience. "It was transmitted in the early evening slot, and from the very outset it was intended for family viewing. It was rather like cowboys and Indians in space really. Lots of shooting, lots of Indians biting the dust, but obviously at no time did we introduce brutality or any sort of gratuitous violence. It was meant to be fast and funny, and also bring in a respectable audience. The basic object of it all was that we hoped the whole family would enjoy it. There would be something for dad, so we would always have some rather nice looking girls, there would be something for mum, so we introduced the handsome hero, there was the man you loved to hate - like Avon and the youngsters would enjoy the fun of the rather comic dialogue of Vila - and of course the whole lot would enjoy the fact that they were all reading adventure stories as well contained in one episode. If you think about it, there are very few adventure stories on television today and we reasoned that on a Monday evening the family would sit down for fifty minutes, and be whisked away to the stars to find a very funny, witty and exciting story all complete."

The stories format throughout the first series remained reasonably unchanged with a predictable blend of high adventure in the spaceways, with our intrepid seveners winning the day against insurmountable odds. By the close of the second series, however, this was to have all changed, with events taking a very unexpected turn. Established characters would just disappear or be killed off, and a pompous little computer called ORAC was introduced. So why the changes? Was there really a need for them? After all it wasn't as though the programme was dramatically dropping in popularity, if anything it was quite the opposite in fact.

"Blake's 7 was permanently taken to the cleaners."

"It was never a case of it needing to be changed, I don't think anything needs to be changed. There's an old American adage that says 'If you have a success, don't change it'. The number of things that have been killed by unnecessarily changing them are endless. What you must remember, science-fiction is a very difficult medium to do, and in this type of drama there's basically two media. There's up in the ship and down on the planet, that in a nutshell is the essence of the programme. The framework we always worked around was boy/girl in the ship, boy/girl on the planet's surface and one other





Blake's 7 photographs © Amersong Editions

one mighty thump he could render some poor chap quite unconscious. So in order again to prevent our heroes from appearing to be invincible, we introduced the fact that he had implanted in his brain a laser-stim inhibiting any acts of aggression. However, it became incredibly hard to create new situations, which are both logical and thrilling in themselves.

"I always said that Blake's Seven is not magic."

"The whole point is that we tried to get away from magic. I always said that Blake's Seven is not magic. They are people with the same human attributes and failings as you and I, only with a little more advanced scientific hardware. Even five hundred years hence, goodness knows what it will be like, but man will still not be magic and will not be invulnerable.

"Now in the case of Sally Knyvette (Jenna) and Gareth Thomas (Blake) they had both decided they no longer wished to continue. Now we couldn't simply recast the parts, as by this time they were so clearly established it wouldn't have worked at all. So they merely faded from the scene, to be replaced by the characters of Tanist (Steven Pacey) and Dayna (Josefine Sibelius) and I think that by removing the characters in this manner was by far the best method." It was rumoured at the time of Gareth's departure, that a contributing factor for him leaving was that he had become disinterested with the part, and felt that his character had become stale and was developing no further.

"This was not in fact true. Gareth had always been a serious actor, having appeared in many classic roles and enjoyed much success in the theatre. Gareth was simply cast as he thought in a part that would run

member cut off and in deadly peril. Of course this was all very nice and we could have had our heroic figures fighting the universe indefinitely, but after a while the programme does rather move into a state of burlesque and we certainly didn't want that sort of situation. I must just say Blake's Seven was permanently tuned to the cleaners. No one had a good word to say about us whatsoever, and after nearly eighteen episodes we had reached a point where an awful amount of criticism was beginning to flood in, mainly concerning the recurring situation whereby whatever the

predicament our heroes found themselves in, it was quite apparent that with one mighty bound they would always escape. Now the essence of good drama is not only to entertain, but also to surprise you. So what's the point in doing something that becomes predictable, and what if more and more the young stars were beginning to think this was silly. So in the end we just simply had to kill somebody off in order to introduce a sense of unpredictability back to the programme.

"Our reasoning behind us deciding to kill the character of Gan off, was that quite early on it

had become abundantly clear that we were always going to have a few headaches in putting this particular character to good use. Our main problem was that he would quite often just be standing around doing absolutely nothing, until such time when he was required to thump someone. Gan, if you like, was the equivalent to Little John in Robin Hood. The whole thing was really Robin Hood in space, with Blake as Robin, Vila as Will Scarlett, Jenna as Maid Marion, Sevastian as the Sheriff of Nottingham and so on. Because of the colossal stature of the man, it was quite evident that with

The ship that was used in the fourth season - Scorpio



for 13 episodes, and when it looked like we would be doing yet another series, he decided that this was going to take him further and further away from the sort of work he actually wished to do. So it was decided that Blake's character would disappear. Was he killed? Was he liquidated? Or was he still alive on Star One—no one knew. He just vanished, as one might say in the Soviet Union, into the Gulag Archipelago. In reality he had been offered leading roles with the Royal Shakespeare Company, and as he had no desire to be typecast he left. All before us we had this terrible example of Rupert Davis, who played Margot, who when he had finished his run, was so closely identified with the part that he found it incredibly hard to find work. An even more marked example was Harry H. Corbett, who was in fact a serious actor, who took the part of Steptoe junior and so successful was he, that his career as a serious actor was finished. After that he appeared in cameo roles on Carry On films. Well, Gareth managed to escape this fate, and became a very successful actor in his own right. Gareth had given his all to twenty-six episodes, which had taken up three years of his life. Doing a series such as *Blake's Seven* demands such effort and energy, that unless you are wholeheartedly devoted, it's time for you to leave.

"Now Sally (Jenna) left, not because we wanted her to, as far as we were concerned we never wanted anyone to leave us, but she wanted to concentrate upon her studies for her Master of Arts Degree. You see she was a very intelligent girl, she was already a Bachelor of Arts, and during our recording breaks would often be found sitting in some corner swotting away. Sally was studying in particular the complete works of Chaucer and his contemporaries. Now, having already killed poor Gan in nasty circumstances, we honestly felt we couldn't do the same to Jenna. We would start to get complaints. We opted to finish it in an honourable good old slap bang style. We knew at that point that we were coming back and obviously we didn't want to leave every one in a depressed state. When series three opened Jenna just wasn't there, and her absence was purposely not mentioned. The truth is, and it's a sad fact to admit, that when someone leaves us you're so obsessed with what is happening to you now, you soon forget them. The reality of life is that you may be reminded and so remind some little memory of the good old days, but by and large you carry on with life as it is and your memory of them gradually fades. So this is what we decided to be

the best and most honourable way out for Jenna's character.

One other character that perished in a brutal manner was Cally, played by Jan Chappell, who was blown up on the planet Tarnia.

"Jan had a little boy, she was a one parent family you see, and while this boy was a true baby she would have a nursemaid with her whilst she was on location. However, by the time we got to series four, this little boy was coming up to three to four years old, and she thought 'What sort of mother am I who's going to abandon my child for weeks on end, it's endless this sort of thing, it takes almost a year to make. She thought I rather wait for another year to go by, without her son knowing she was more than just someone who merely rushed in with his supper and disappeared again. So for her boy's sake she decided she couldn't really carry on, however we managed to persuade her to appear in the first few episodes of series four, with the understanding that her character would then meet a nasty end. As we got nearer and nearer to starting series four she began to regret her agreement and said 'I am awfully sorry but I want to take back what I said, I don't want to do it.' So we then had to hastily introduce a new character.

"The love interest?"

"Our problems in episode one of the fourth series were that we had to account for the liberator destroyed, find them a new ship to get them off their mark and introduce a new girl artist. So entered Dorian, a scrap merchant of the spaceways, with a ship reminiscent of an old *Austin Seven* and Soolin, as his glamorous sharp shooting sidekick. Now poor old Soolin, played by a very attractive young actress called Glyne Barber, had at that particular point no character whatsoever, we just couldn't find a role for her. It was quite clear that Aven was the leader and vicious psycho, Tarnant was the expert flyer. Vila was there because he was frightened to be on his own and Dyna because her entire family had been murdered. So what the dickens were we to make Soolin? The love interest? Well we don't have love interest in this sort of show and Vila only ever got a bit romantic after he had a few drinks. We did toy with the idea but realised that it brought in an element that did not really belong. Adults would despise it as they would want something a little more meaningful and children would reject it as nothing more than soppy mush.

"Soolin towards the end developed well. Suddenly midway through the series Glyne seem-



Blake - Gareth Thomas

ed to find her way playing a very laid back, with a dry sarcasm and very flip. She also discovered a way of holding her hands, and suddenly Soolin worked!

It is hard to reason or even define why *Blake's Seven* captured the public imagination the way it did, but it must owe much to its characters and to their intricate interplay

"The characters are undoubtedly the most important aspect of the programme, and that is why I believe it has always held the affections of the audience. There was a member of the group in which everyone could identify with, we even had a coward. Vila was a dreadful coward. He was a funny, witty coward, but he was as fright-

ered to hell, there was no hero about him and he would endlessly bind on about Blake's "We must attack them in the heart of their lie!" approach. Poor Vile would often react with a "Oh my God here we go again, do we really have to? Couldn't we just leave quietly. It's only because you want to be a hero, Blake." The reproach he got from Blake would always be the same "We have gained our lives, we owe it to others". Avon despised Blake, but he knew him to be a figure of integrity, he knew Blake told the truth. If he said "I will be faithful to you" then he knew he would, but he still thought him an absolute idiot, because heroes get you killed. Avon was forced into following Blake's path of attacking the Federation, due merely to circumstances beyond his control. Usually he wanted something, and the Federation held some sort of control over it and so he was required to attack its emissaries to gain control of what he wanted. He never did anything heroic for the sake of being heroic - Blake would. Blake was an idealist, his ideal was to make the universe a better place. Avon's, on the other hand, was simply to make as much out of it as possible and depart promptly. As always, a reluctant Vile was dragged along for the ride.

So was it through mere respect that Avon followed Blake, a man he despised intensely for his upright values and determined desire to rid the universe of the Federation vermin?

"Well, what you must remember is that no one really wanted to be where they were, they were all trapped, and so he had to put up with each other whether they liked each other or not. Blake considered himself as a natural leader, Avon was there because he had nowhere else to go, he had no alternative. Unlike Blake he was a man who would do nothing unless he felt

there was something in it for him. He respected Blake, but at the time thought him an absolute fool for doing what he did for nothing. The only reason for his promising Blake that he would fight off the Andromedan invasion force, was not because he had a sudden attack of moral conscience, but he had no other option. He was a man who had been convicted of the greatest universal computer fraud, and on the run from the forces of the Federation. All he had was his life, and nothing to lose." So how was the progression of Avon's character into becoming a paranoid schizophrenic rationalised?

"Avon was gradually going out of his mind."

"Paul and I discussed this most thoroughly, and in our view Avon was gradually going out of his mind. I don't mean by that he was having strokes in his hat, but if you think about it he had survived brushes with death for four years, and there was no such thing as I haven't had a holiday yet! His life was in constant danger. He never really enjoyed the terrors of death, he didn't enjoy it one bit, but because he was surrounded by it permanently he gradually became psycho. The real turning point was in the story *STAR-DRIVE*, when he cold bloodily murdered the scientist - Dr Plaxton - had perfected a photon drive, and with this advanced stardrive facility installed in the Scorpio the ship would then have the ability to outrun any Federation craft. However, whilst Plaxton was installing the system, Avon spotted approaching Federation ships and so ordered the crew to blast off, unconcerned that by doing so his actions would kill Plaxton instantly. Now he would argue that by not sacrificing her life, they would not have es-

caped to fight another day. They loathed him for that act of cold blooded murder, but he gave buckets of cold logic to it. Was he doing it to save his own skin? Was he psycho or was he not? In my opinion he was becoming ruthless, with no consideration for others, culminating of course with his murder of Blake.

"Why?" he asked Blake "Have you betrayed us?" Now if only Blake had replied with "I haven't betrayed you" then the dreadful tragedy that followed could have been avoided. The atmosphere was so jumpy, nerves so strained after four years of not knowing what to believe. Don't forget that previous to this ill-fated meeting, Avon had through a drug induced hallucination already seen an imaginary Blake. Now because of the ambiguous nature of Blake's reply - "Avon. Listen. Listen. Let me explain - Avon could no longer decide whether this person before him was a real man, or just another apparition, and in this terrible state of doubt and tension he fired. You can't possibly equate that sort of character, and that's why I think people become so hooked on Avon. He became more and more intense, and so very unpredictable."

A good adventure story wouldn't be the same without a villain, with whom your hero could pit his wits against and thwart in whatever diabolical scheme undertaken. In Blake's Seven's case the villain was a villainess, by the name of Servalan (Jacqueline Pearce). The character possessed such cold and calculating cunning that she and Avon were in actual fact considered as the two sides of the same evil coin. In fact Servalan admired, and indeed fancied Avon and to have him as her man, would have delighted and suited her purpose well. With her brains and his ability no one would stand in her path to attaining ultimate power.

"The trouble with Servalan's character was that there was a limit to the number of times we could have her pitted against Blake and Avon, only to be permanently outwitted. We had a situation whereby Servalan was in a sense always saying 'Alright, you've beaten me this time, but wait until our next encounter', the typical Sherlock Holmes and Moriarty syndrome. It becomes rather like Tom and Jerry, and Servalan becomes a figure of some comedy. Here she is supposedly all powerful, when how old powerful is she if after 52 episodes she can't outwit them.

"Now in the first two series she was known by all as Servalan, but at the end of the adventure "Star One" we had this great catastrophic cosmic battle after which the old powers of the Federation were ousted from office, to be replaced

by a new regime. Servalan's name became mud! However, managing to elude her captors, she changed her name to Commander Sleer, and soon her natural talents were to bring her once again to high office. We made her not quite the great commander she once was, so that we could again provide surprise and not have reactions of 'Oh God! Here's Servalan yet again'. In the final series we began not to use the character quite so much, mainly because our writers kept on coming up to us to say 'I've got this wonderfully original idea, but do we really have to have Servalan popping up once again to say hah-hah!' So you see it got beyond the joke. We were trying to create surprises from a situation where Servalan was no longer a surprise, it was expected. However, having said that, we did consider the idea that we would in the last episode have Servalan sweep out from the wings to have the last laugh but we thought that is what everyone would expect and we wanted something to catch everyone unawares, and by God we did!

"I don't think anyone expected us to go on for ever."

"I don't think anyone expected us to go on forever, and it was a very great surprise when a third series went ahead and an even greater surprise when a fourth was announced. We had been given the impression that of the end of series three we were going to finish, however the powers that be had seen how well we were doing and so a snap decision to carry on was made. We were told unequivocally that the fourth series was it. At the end of each series we intentionally left it on a suspenseful note, just in case there was to be another and also to sustain interest. For the culmination of Blake's Seven, Chris Boucher (Script Editor) and myself deliberately did an ending that would leave everyone in a terrible state, in such a way that it would provide a sensational ending and one that would really stick in the mind. Indeed, no one has ever forgotten it. You see we didn't want it to trickle off into nothingness and end with them flying off into the stars, as practically every other episode ended in that way and it would have left the series boringly open-ended. However by the same token we can still ask ourselves, did they die or not? - when they were shot there was never actually any blood, unlike poor old Blake who was swimming in it, they fell as if in a dream.

"In some quadrant of the galaxy, they could still be there - we shall NEVER know!"

Servalan in a classic pose



Spook fixed it for Jim!



Well, should the powers that be at Paramount have blown up the 'Enterprise'? I certainly felt more sadness than for the death of Spock, oh, sorry Spock. For me, and for many I know, it really did feel like the end of 'Star Trek'. After watching, horror-struck, the devastating and irrevocable destruction of the 'Enterprise' the rest of the film unfolded with my mind in a certain numbness. "They can't do that" ... "Was that really the Enterprise?" ... "What's left for its one-time crew?" ... were some of the thoughts that were going through my mind.

Leonard Nimoy has been quoted as saying that the destruction of the ship was the necessary sacrifice for bringing Spock back to life. Was it really? Even given the Starfleet's forgiveness of the crew's actions what is there left of the concept that we all love? Is it just memories?

Well as you can see I have my solution. I got Spock, sorry Spock (the other not being able/available) to fix the 'Enterprise'. Well it was his fault anyway. Illogical? No, for me the 'Enterprise' will continue to boldly go where no man has gone before ...

Stephen Payne





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We welcome all letters
concerning *Science fiction/
Fantasy television or films*
that might be of interest to
other readers of "Fantasy
Image".

Sell out

Stuart Hutton,
BOLTON, Lancs.

I am writing to congratulate
you on an excellent first issue
of your magazine "Fantasy
Image". The first thing that
struck me was the quality of
the magazine. Printed on high
quality paper with clear
photographs this magazine
must surely be a sell out and I
shouldn't think it will be long
before it takes over from
inferior Sci-Fi/fantasy
magazines such as the
abysmal "Starburst" and the
trivial "Space Voyager".

The articles in this issue
were all of interest. John
Ainsworth's article on the
three "Star Trek" films was
very good, his views closely
paralleled my own. Andrew
Evans' piece on the originality
of "Doctor Who" was also
very good bringing up some
interesting points.

I could list all the articles I
enjoyed but that would take a
long time. I think it's safe to
say that "Fantasy Image" will
be a success.

V bad

Kerth Koie
CHICAGO, Illinois.

Congratulations on producing
such a fine premiere issue of
your magazine, "Fantasy
Image". I really liked the
cover photograph, this proved
to me that Colin and Tom
Baker do not look exactly
alike. You provided a nice
blend of science fiction and
fantasy articles which proved
to be quite enjoyable reading.
Even those articles in which
the words "Doctor Who" did
not appear in the first
paragraph.

I must say, though, that I
agree with Andrew Sewell's
criticism of "V". Here in the
States "V" is seen as a
weekly television show on
NBC. Recent reports have it
that if the ratings don't pick up
soon the show will eventually
be cancelled. I feel the
programme deserves such a
fate.

Frankly, I could never buy
the original premise to begin
with. If this lizard race has
developed inter-stellar travel,
and extraterrestrial weaponry
why must they resort to
subterfuge to fool Earthlings
whom they appear to be no

more intelligent than? Also,
humanity now knows of the
villains true lizard identities, so
why should they ever appear
in human forms again besides
to give an actor a chance for
his face to be seen? (I
shouldn't complain, really,
since I myself am a thespian.)
State of the art special effects
do not make up for the lack of
plot exposition, poor dialogue,
and bad alien acting. (But then
again, how does an alien act?)
Keep the good work up on
your beautiful magazine. I trust
it will have a long and healthy
life.

Hot off

Jeremy Bentham,
Hendon, LONDON.

I must say I did enjoy the
magazine tremendously, and
its very high standards of
production. I certainly take my
hat off to you if you were
involved in any of the current
nigmarola surrounding
obtaining copyright clearances
on BBC photographs.

The Sydney Newman
feature was my best read.
Admittedly I was looking to
see if there was any
remembrances from him about
the ITV "Pashnders" series
("Pashnders to the moon",
"...to Mars", "...to Venus",
and "City beneath the Sea")
which Newman maintained
was the blueprint for "Doctor
Who" inasmuch as the line-up
of characters.

Overall though, a very
culpable publication and
certainly streets ahead
design-wise over its "Empire"
namesake. Best of luck with
issue two.

Editor replies: The BBC
photograph clearances are
certainly causing problems.
Other television and film
companies such as ITC and
Paramount have very
obligingly provided
photographs for publication.
The BBC however, aside
from charging very high
publication fees, request that
EVERY recognisable actor
appearing in a photograph,
has to be contacted to give
written permission for
publication of that
photograph. This could
mean that if one person out
of twenty people appearing
in a photograph objected to
publication, the photograph
could not be used. The
worst example I heard of
was when actor Leonard
Rossiter died, naturally the
National papers rang the
BBC for photographs only to
be told that they must

contact Leonard Rossiter for
permission, or at least his
estate. I cannot imagine
anything worse for the
relatives to have various
members of the press
contacting them at such a
time.

We are continuing to look
into the matter and are
hopeful of reaching a more
satisfactory arrangement.
Unfortunately, because of
these complications, we
have had to delay publishing
an interview, that we
conducted with the Stars of
TriPods, until next issue.

Bored Witless

Marron Breeze
East Ham, London.

On seeing issue one of "Fantasy
Image" I was impressed with its
professional look and hoped I
would find enough of interest to
me in a mixed media magazine.
"Doctor Who" and "Star Trek"
are my particular favourites and I
enjoyed the articles on them.
Andrew Evans' "Original Who"
presented a good overview of
Doctor Who's twenty-one years.
The only point I would quarrel
with was his statement that the
Doctor, by devoting the wooden
horse in Myth Makers was not
changing history but creating it.
I mean, who is to say how things
would have turned out if left to
their own devices. The Doctor is
an outside agent and any change
he makes will change history.

The *Bleaker's* 7 convention
report was very entertaining.
After all the tales of Trek cons in
America with 1000's of attendees
it was nice to read about them
holding such a relatively small
con. Loved the question about
whether Tarry Nelson had
considered using the Daleks in
Bleaker's 7? Servian jinnin forces
with Davros could be quite fun.

The other article I couldn't work
up any interest in were the ones
on "The TriPods". After watching
part one and being bored witless
I gave it up as a bad job. I also
felt the back page picture of the
TriPod was a waste of a colour
page.

Overall issue one was most
entertaining. A good selection of
articles and photos. I look forward
to issue two - with, I hope, the
"round-up" section enlarged.

Editor replies: Sounds like we are
doing the right thing, even if you
don't share my love of TriPods.
With the relative slowness of
pace that the TriPods team has
chosen it would perhaps do
better, and make it more enjoy-
able for you, in longer segments.
This is unlike "Doctor Who"
which worked well in twenty-five
minutes but now finds itself in
forty-five!

Letters



